

## ON A NEW SNAKE FROM THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS.

BY DR. ALBERT GÜNTHER.

The genus *Herpetodryas*, being composed of those *Dryadidæ* which have the maxillary teeth of equal length and entirely smooth, comprises snakes from America and from Madagascar. The following species comes from the Galapagos Islands, and appears to be the only Snake as yet known to inhabit that group\*.

## HERPETODRYAS BISERIALIS.

*Diagnosis*.—Scales in nineteen rows; eight upper labials, three posterior oculars. Light brown, with a dark-brown dorsal band, serrated on the anterior portion of the trunk, and formed by a double series of spots on the middle and on the posterior part of the back. A dark-brown streak from the eye across the cheek. Belly irregularly dotted with brown.

*Hab.* In Charles Island (Galapagos). Typical specimen in the Collection of the British Museum.

*Description*.—The head is rather depressed, flat, and, like the trunk and tail, somewhat elongate; the eye is of moderate size, with the pupil round. The rostral does not reach to the upper surface of the snout; the anterior frontals are square, the posterior ones about twice the size and subquadrangular; the vertical is rather slender, twice as long as broad; the occipitals triangular and rather pointed posteriorly. The nostril is situated between two shields; the loreal nearly square; the anterior ocular extends to the upper surface of the head, and is in contact with the vertical. There are three posterior oculars, the middle of which is the smallest, the inferior forming a part of the lower portion of the orbit; the temporal shields are scale-like and rather irregularly arranged. There are eight upper labials, the fourth and fifth coming into the orbit. The median lower labial is triangular, and of moderate size; ten lower labials, the first of which is in contact with its fellow, behind the median shield. There are two pairs of elongate skin-shields of equal size. The scales are perfectly smooth, in nineteen rows, rhombic, those of the outer series being rather larger. Ventral plates 209; anal bifid; caudals 108.

The ground-colour is a light brownish-grey: a vertebral band, formed by dark brown spots, begins from the occiput, and is gradually lost on the middle of the tail; it is continuous anteriorly, and serrated on both sides, but gradually dissolved into two series of brown spots, the spots of each series being confluent on the end of

\* The first mention of a Snake on these islands seems to be in Dampier's 'Voy. Round the World,' ed. 7. vol. i. 8vo. Lond. 1729, p. 103:—"There are some Green Snakes on these islands; but no other land-animal that I did ever see."

Darwin says in his Journ. of Research., p. 381, speaking on the Zoology of the Galapagos Islands:—"There is one snake which is numerous; it is identical, as I am informed by M. Bibron, with the *Psammophis Temminckii* from Chile." Although subsequently, in the 'Erpétologie Générale,' nothing is mentioned by Duméril and Bibron about the occurrence of *P. Temminckii*, or of any other snake, in these islands, that determination of Bibron may possibly be correct. If such be the case, there are two species of Snakes in that group of islands.

the trunk ; there is a dark brown streak across the temple. The belly is greyish, and finely and irregularly speckled with brown.

	inches. lines.	
Total length .....	14	3
Length of the head .....	0	5
Greatest width of the head .....	0	3
Length of the trunk .....	10	0
Length of the tail .....	3	10

The maxillary teeth are of moderate size, of nearly equal length, in a continuous series, and entirely smooth.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### *Observations on the Corymbose Madreporæ.*

By M. A. VALENCIENNES.

ONE of our most elegant forms of Madrepora is that called *Madrepora corymbosa* by Lamarck. Reducing the characters of the genus to those now fixed by Ehrenberg, and studying the fine specimens contained in the Museum at Paris, the author has found that Lamarck united, under the name of *Madrepora corymbosa*, at least three distinct species : one hollowed out into a very shallow cup, brought by Péron and Lesueur in 1803, for which he retains Lamarck's name ; a second, spread out in the form of a fan, which was obtained by the celebrated Professor of the Garden of Plants at the sale of the collection of Madame de Bois-Jourdain, which came from the Caribbean Sea, together with the first specimen ever seen in France of the recent *Encrinus* (*Encrinus caput-Medusæ*). To this species the author gives the name of *Madrepora flabilis* : it is characterized by the shortness of the branches, which are less slender than those of *M. corymbosa*, Lamk. and Val. The third species, more spread out and spinose, is named *M. corymbitis*, Val. ; it appears to be intermediate between the two preceding species.

M. Milne-Edwards, in his work on Corals, has added a fine species of these Madreporæ, to which he has given the name of *Madrepora flabelliformis* : it is from the seas of Vanikolo ; the specimen in the Paris Museum was obtained by MM. Hombron and Jacquinot in the voyage of Admiral d'Urville. This species is distinguished from the West Indian one by its closer and longer branches.

The Museum of Natural History has just acquired four new species of these corymbose Madreporæ, obtained at Marseilles by M. L. Rousseau, one of the assistants in the Museum. These beautifully preserved corals show, in a more certain manner than could have been suspected from the specimens deposited in our collections from the time of Lamarck, that the species of these corymbose Madreporæ obtained from the American seas are different from those of the great Indian Ocean, although preserving an analogous form in allied species. To establish this fact, the author first adduces the species to which he gives the name of *M. radicans*, of which the